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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997*

Part VI Human rights and humanitarian affairs

Section 22
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Overview 1

* The present document contains section 22 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. The complete proposed programme budget will subsequently be issued in final printed form as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/50/6/Rev.1).

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Section 22
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Overview

22.1 The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 319 A (IV) of 3 December 1949 and its statute was approved by the Assembly in resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950. Subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Committee of UNHCR have called on the Office, in the context of its basic mandate, to assist other groups of persons regarded as falling within the competence of the High Commissioner.

22.2 The overall objective of UNHCR is to provide international protection to refugees and to seek durable solutions to refugee problems. On the one hand, UNHCR is required to safeguard the fundamental principles of asylum and non-refoulement and to ensure that the basic rights of refugees are respected and that they are treated in a decent and humane manner. On the other hand, UNHCR has had to develop, at the request of the General Assembly and the Governments concerned, substantial material assistance programmes to meet refugee needs. In complex humanitarian emergencies UNHCR also contributes to the provision of humanitarian assistance.

22.3 The UNHCR programme of work during the biennium 1996-1997, in varying and largely unpredictable situations, can be summarized as follows: (a) to promote further accession to international instruments relating to the status of refugees or otherwise benefiting refugees; (b) to ensure the effective implementation of refugee rights, especially those of women and children, through the widest possible observance by States of internationally accepted standards for the treatment of refugees; (c) to promote and disseminate the principles of refugee law; (d) to develop contingency planning and emergency preparedness and response capabilities so as to respond effectively to refugee situations and to be able to contribute effectively to the United Nations coordinated response to complex humanitarian situations; and (e) to search for durable solutions to refugee situations.

22.4 The Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1166 (XII) of 26 November 1957 to advise the High Commissioner in the exercise of his/her functions and to approve the use of extrabudgetary funds made available to the High Commissioner, meets annually and consists of representatives of 55 member countries. The Committee is assisted by the Subcommittee of the Whole on the International Protection of Refugees, in the analysis of technical and legal aspects of the protection of refugees, and by the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters in its consideration of the managerial, financial and administrative aspects of its work. Reports on the sessions of the Executive Committee are submitted to the General Assembly as addenda to the reports of the High Commissioner.

22.5 UNHCR provides overall direction, supervision and management in the implementation of the activities outlined below. The Office is responsible for the implementation of five subprogrammes of programme 36, International protection of and assistance to refugees, of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as revised (A/47/6/Rev.1).

22.6 Within the programme of work, the estimated percentage distribution of resources among subprogrammes would be as follows:

	Regular budget	*Extra-budgetary*
	(percentage)	
Subprogramme 1 International instruments relating to the status of refugees or otherwise benefiting refugees	0.5	0.2
Subprogramme 2 Effective implementation of refugee rights	0.6	0.2
Subprogramme 3 Promotion and dissemination of principles of refugee law	0.5	0.2
Subprogramme 4 Emergency response and relief, care and maintenance	68.1	69.4
Subprogramme 5 Durable solutions	30.3	30.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

22.7 Owing to the nature of the programme, no designation of priority was given by the General Assembly.

Table 22.1 **Summary of requirements**
(Thousands of United States dollars)

(1) *Regular budget*

Object of expenditure	*1992-1993 expenditures*	*1994-1995 appropriations*	*Resource growth*		*Total before recosting*	*Recosting*	*1996-1997 estimates*
			Amount	*Percentage*			
Posts	41 655.1	48 572.7	—	—	48 572.7	3 484.5	52 057.2
Total	**41 655.1**	**48 572.7**	**—**	**—**	**48 572.7**	**3 484.5**	**52 057.2**

(2) *Extrabudgetary resources*

1992-1993 expenditures	*1994-1995 estimates*	*Object of expenditure*	*1996-1997 estimates*
79 173.2	116 222.0	Posts	119 182.8
4 110.9	3 660.0	Other staff costs	8 459.4
1 258.7	4 379.1	Consultants and experts	4 063.0
9 124.2	16 253.0	Travel	17 291.4
6 302.3	7 438.4	Contractual services	8 580.6
13 532.5	19 894.5	General operating expenses	22 076.8
2 173.6	2 915.9	Supplies and materials	3 073.8
4 618.3	11 304.9	Furniture	6 313.8
10 114.6	17 005.6	Other expenditure	17 660.6
2 248 507.7	2 271 250.5	Operational activities	2 210 183.6
2 378 916.0	**2 470 323.9**		**2 416 885.8**
2 420 571.1	**2 518 896.6**		**2 468 943.0**

Table 22.2 **Post requirements**

Organizational unit: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

	Established posts		*Temporary posts*					
	Regular budget		*Regular budget*		*Extrabudgetary resources*		*Total*	
	1994-1995	*1996-1997*	*1994-1995*	*1996-1997*	*1994-1995*	*1996-1997*	*1994-1995*	*1996-1997*
Professional category and above								
USG	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1
ASG	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1
D-2	2	2	—	—	13	16	15	18
D-1	10	10	—	—	45	49	55	59
P-5	19	19	—	—	118	128	137	147
P-4/3	41	41	—	—	808	972	849	1 013
P-2/1	15	15	—	—	190	204	205	219
Total	**89**	**89**	**—**	**—**	**1 174**	**1 369**	**1 263**	**1 458**
General Service category								
Principal level	4	4	—	—	42	42	46	46
Other levels	151	151	—	—	251	283	402	434
Total	**155**	**155**	**—**	**—**	**293**	**325**	**448**	**480**
Other categories								
Local level	—	—	—	—	2 501	3 303	2 501	3 303
Total	**—**	**—**	**—**	**—**	**2 501**	**3 303**	**2 501**	**3 303**
Grand total	**244**	**244**	**—**	**—**	**3 968**	**4 997**	**4 212**	**5 241**

22.8 The programme of work is implemented at UNHCR headquarters by the Executive Office, the Divisions of International Protection; External Relations; Controller and Management Services; Programmes and Operational Support; Human Resources Management; and five regional bureaux. In the field, the programme is implemented by some 210 offices. Fourteen regional representatives and 103 country representatives act on behalf of the High Commissioner in all aspects of the Office's activities in the country or countries to which they are accredited.

Programme of work

International protection

Subprogramme 1
International instruments relating to the status of refugees or otherwise benefiting refugees

22.9 The objectives of this subprogramme are to promote further acceptance of the existing documents; to elaborate new international or regional instruments; and to encourage and review the inclusion of provisions favourable to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in general international and regional instruments as well as in national legislation.

22.10 Progress towards the achievement of the above objectives is reflected in the number of States that have acceded to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol, which increased to 127 as at 30 November 1994. At the same date, 18 States had acceded to the European Agreement of 20 April 1959 on the abolition of visas for refugees, and 10 States to the European Agreement of 16 October 1980 on the transfer of responsibility for refugees. While the accession rate to those instruments could be considered satisfactory, accessions to other instruments such as the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1957 Agreement relating to Refugee Seamen require further efforts.

Activities

1. International cooperation

(a) Promotion of a wider acceptance by States of the basic refugee instruments and related international conventions beneficial to the protection of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, and, where applicable, the withdrawal of the geographical limitation and other reservations made by States upon becoming parties to the 1951 Convention;

(b) Elaboration of additional international instruments for the benefit of refugees. There is also a continuing need for consultations between UNHCR and Governments to encourage and review initiatives to include provisions favourable to refugees and returnees in general international and regional instruments as well as in national legislation.

2. Parliamentary services

Substantive services: substantive and technical services will be provided to the annual sessions of the Executive Committee and meetings of the Subcommittee of the Whole on the International Protection of Refugees.

3. Published material

An estimated 1,600 pages of treaty texts and explanatory documentation in the form of a revised new edition of the collection of international instruments, including the management of a database for the maintenance and publication of records of accession, declarations and reservations made by States to the international instruments concerning refugees, as well as promotional material.

Subprogramme 2
Effective implementation of refugee rights

22.11 Through this subprogramme UNHCR will continue to pursue the effective implementation by States of the provisions contained in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol together with efforts undertaken in accordance with subprogramme 1. Where refugee problems arise in countries not parties to either the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol, UNHCR action will be directed towards ensuring that refugees receive

as favourable a legal status as possible, that they are treated in accordance with relevant principles of general international law and established principles of human rights, and that, at the minimum, they are protected against refoulement.

22.12 Other related objectives will aim at improving the protection of refugee women and refugee children. As regards refugee women, in addition to assuring their better protection, one goal continues to be promoting their participation, as agents and as beneficiaries, in the planning and implementation of protection programmes. Concerning refugee children, the objective is to ensure that their special protection needs, particularly those of unaccompanied minors, are met.

Activities

1. International cooperation

(a) In States not parties to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees that face large-scale influxes of refugees and displaced persons, UNHCR efforts include the protection and material assistance to refugees and displaced persons. Work will also aim to encourage States to adopt legislation for the protection of refugees, to strengthen existing laws, policies and programmes in that regard and to ensure their full implementation;

(b) At the invitation of the Governments of refugees' countries of origin, UNHCR works through legal assistance, mediation, dialogue and monitoring to facilitate the successful reintegration of returnees;

(c) Seeking the participation of Governments, UNHCR will take initiatives for refugee women in the areas of leadership and skills training, legal awareness, education, and, in particular, in the area of reproductive health;

(d) Efforts will also be addressed to the special needs of refugee children, particularly in relation to their health, nutrition and education, and for the prompt registration, tracing and family reunion of unaccompanied children, as well as to safeguard the security of refugee children and to ensure that they are not recruited into the military or other forces.

2. Published material

(a) Parliamentary documentation: two reports to the Executive Committee;

(b) Elaboration and dissemination of guidelines on the prevention of and response to sexual violence against refugees; and care of refugee children;

(c) Issuance of travel documents in various languages to assist Governments in implementing the rights of refugees under the existing international instruments, and of refugee identity cards to assist in refugee census and identification operations of resident refugee populations; and the facilitation of national documentation for returnees.

3. Operational activities

UNHCR will continue to provide legal counselling and representation facilities so as to ensure that refugees are able to benefit from the standards laid down in international instruments and from the relevant provisions of national legislation, and will intervene, as appropriate, with national authorities to prevent violations of those standards.

Subprogramme 3
Promotion and dissemination of principles of refugee law

22.13 The objectives of this subprogramme are (a) to enhance the understanding for human rights law and the causes for displacement; (b) to promote an increased understanding of the special position of refugees, returnees and displaced persons; (c) to create a climate of opinion favourable to the strengthening of their legal status; and (d) to promote a wider knowledge of the principles of international protection, with particular emphasis on the refugee law training of staff of Governments and non-governmental organizations.

22.14 Although there has been an increased awareness of refugee problems, further efforts are still required to disseminate as widely as possible information concerning those problems and knowledge of refugee law, law teaching to take into account the new area of prevention, particularly in view of the recent large-scale influxes and intercontinental movements of refugees, as well as repatriations of other groups of refugees. By enhancing understanding for refugee and human rights law as well as the causes for displacement through training courses in the country of origin, the compulsion for persons to leave their country of origin might be reduced. In addition, with the progressive development of refugee law as a branch of international law, it is important to promote further the teaching of refugee law and international protection principles as a field of academic study.

Activities

1. Published material

(a) Issuance of approximately 20 publications and studies in various languages in the field of refugee law, including reports of seminars and meetings; lectures and background papers; and assistance in the publication of an independent international journal of refugee law;

(b) *Technical material*. Establishment and maintenance of databases on international and national legislation and case law.

2. Information materials and services

Particular attention will be given to the production and dissemination of booklets, films and video tapes, press releases, radio broadcasts and tapes of news and documentary and feature programmes, as well as the organization of exhibits, guided tours, lectures, seminars and special events.

3. Operational activities

(a) *Group training, including seminars and workshops*. About 80 seminars at the national, regional and international level for the in-depth examination of new legal problems in the field of international protection and/or for the review and development of existing standards; special priority will be given to training workshops at the regional and national levels for government officials responsible for the legal/protection aspects of refugee problems, particularly in those States which have more recently, or not yet, become parties to the international refugee instruments;

(b) One annual course on refugee law, in coordination with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (San Remo, Italy);

(c) A series of regional protection seminars conducted for UNHCR staff in order to follow up on the findings and recommendations of the report of the Working Group on International Protection;

(d) Six conferences and round tables in cooperation with other institutions on specific topics.

4. Coordination, harmonization and liaison

(a) Cooperation and liaison with other United Nations bodies will be strengthened with a view to sharing ideas, information, experience and documentation. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations will also be strengthened in order to stimulate and strengthen their interest in refugee law and international protection. Joint efforts in training refugee advocacy lawyers and other refugee law practitioners will be particularly important in that respect;

(b) Consultations will be held with ministries of education and officials of institutions of higher learning with a view to promoting the introduction of courses on refugee law in the relevant curricula.

Subprogramme 4
Emergency response and relief, care and maintenance

22.15 The objectives of the subprogramme fall into two general categories:

(a) To provide relief to refugees in emergency situations and, in particular, to focus on the special needs of women and children through projects, organization of special seminars and research programmes, and provision of guidance at the policy level to ensure that women's and children's needs are integrated into assistance and protection programmes; to promote efficiency and effectiveness of emergency preparedness and response to new refugee situations; and to participate, at the invitation of the Secretary-General, in special humanitarian operations for which UNHCR has particular expertise and experience;

(b) To promote the development and implementation of intermediate assistance measures, pending the identification of durable solutions, with the ultimate aim of enabling refugee groups and individuals to become self-supporting in the country of first asylum in order to contain the need for prolonged care and maintenance programmes and to lessen the financial burden on the host Government and on the international community.

22.16 The activities addressed in this subprogramme embrace refugees in an initial emergency influx and those in ongoing refugee situations. In the first category, there are the large numbers of asylum-seekers, either individuals or groups, who have been forced to flee from their countries of origin. Usually these persons leave in conditions of severe personal and family deprivation, including loss of or separation from family members, property and means of livelihood, and they therefore find themselves in a destitute state in countries of first asylum. The provision of basic relief assistance to such persons, with special attention given to the specific needs of women and children, is of paramount importance in the initial phase of a refugee crisis.

22.17 After the emergency phase has passed, the role of UNHCR is to provide ongoing care and maintenance to refugees while searching for durable solutions to their situation. Such assistance may include the provision of food, transportation, shelter, water, health services, sanitation, clothing, household utensils and basic education. Whenever feasible, programmes also include vocational training or small income-generating activities to prepare refugees for a more productive life and promote a reasonable degree of self-reliance. The aim, then, is greater refugee participation in programmes aimed at self-sufficiency and preparation for the anticipated durable solutions. In these programmes, the potential contribution of refugee women as agents in their planning and implementation is emphasized. Such protection and assistance may also be extended to displaced persons where appropriate and in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Activities

1. International cooperation

During past bienniums and in cooperation with Governments of asylum or donor countries, UNHCR has responded to emergency refugee situations and has implemented care and maintenance programmes. In the biennium 1996-1997, UNHCR will continue such activities and will also enhance its capacities so as to be able to make an effective contribution in addressing refugee situations.

2. Parliamentary services

(a) *Parliamentary documentation*. Two reports on the overall results of operations to the General Assembly at its fifty-first and fifty-second sessions, through the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme;

(b) *Substantive services*. Substantive and technical services will be provided to the meetings of the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters in analysing the activities of the subprogramme.

3. Operational activities

Continued provision of emergency management training to participating Governments and non-governmental organizations acting as implementing partners, and to UNHCR staff; and the improvement of core materials for the emergency management training programme.

4. Coordination, harmonization and liaison

Cooperation and liaison with the various working groups convened by the United Nations Emergency Coordinator, in particular with the Inter-agency Standing Committee, and with WFP in providing food for refugee/returnee situations and other situations in which UNHCR involvement is requested. Means of greater cooperation are being addressed with UNICEF, UNDP, and the International Organization for Migration in matters relating to the movement of refugees and relevant public information programmes.

Subprogramme 5
Durable solutions

22.18 The objectives of the subprogramme are to promote the durable solutions of voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement, and, in relation to the two preferred solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration, to encourage an appropriate contribution on the part of development agencies in assuring those solutions.

22.19 The most appropriate durable solution to large-scale refugee situations continues to be voluntary repatriation. Voluntary repatriation usually requires assistance to satisfy the immediate needs of returnees as well as short-term rehabilitation and reconstruction initiatives to enable the returnees to attain a standard of living and self-sufficiency comparable to that of the local population. In addition, long-term development assistance may be needed in the country of origin to facilitate the reintegration of returnees. Appropriate development projects and initiatives, implemented by the host Government with development agencies' support and UNHCR involvement, aim at facilitating the integration of returnees in their country of origin.

22.20 As long as voluntary repatriation is not possible, local integration in the country of first asylum is the next preferred durable solution, which implies a full integration of the refugees in the host country. UNHCR assists host countries in identifying, appraising, planning and developing local integration schemes, both rural and urban, to create socio-economically viable communities where refugees can meet their basic needs and fully integrate into local economies.

22.21 Resettlement in third countries continues to be the durable solution resorted to for individual refugees or refugee groups for whom neither voluntary repatriation nor local integration in the country of first asylum will guarantee a secure, stable and dignified future. These criteria derive not only from conditions in the country of origin but also from those in the country of first asylum where temporary asylum may be granted on condition that resettlement to a third country will be undertaken as soon as possible or ethnic, political or economic reasons may render local integration impossible. Of all the three durable solutions, resettlement invariably involves the greatest upheaval and poses the greatest challenge in readjustment terms for the individuals concerned.

Activities

1. International cooperation

(a) In the case of voluntary repatriation, UNHCR seeks to establish tripartite commissions made up of representatives of the country of asylum, the country of origin and UNHCR so as to work out the conditions under which a voluntary repatriation will take place;

(b) In the search for solutions through local integration, UNHCR will continue to assist host countries in identifying, appraising, planning and developing local rural and urban settlement schemes, the ultimate objective being to assist refugees so that their basic needs can be met and so that they can thus be fully integrated into local communities;

(c) In relation to resettlement, UNHCR consults with Governments and international and national organizations in establishing refugee resettlement quotas and in preparing and arranging the movement of refugees to countries of permanent asylum, and of assessing the professional and socio-economic potential of the refugees to be resettled in order to facilitate their integration in resettlement countries.

2. Parliamentary services

(a) *Parliamentary documentation*. Two reports on the overall results in achieving durable solutions to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme;

(b) *Substantive services*. Substantive and technical services will be provided to the meetings of the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters in examining matters relating to durable solutions.

3. Coordination, harmonization and liaison

Of the durable solutions, voluntary repatriation to developing countries of origin needs to be facilitated by developmental efforts in the areas to which refugees return. The High Commissioner has played a catalytic role in cooperating with development agencies to complement ongoing assistance or in phasing out her assistance once durable solutions have been reached.

Resource requirements (at current rates)

22.22 In accordance with article 20 in the statute of UNHCR, no expenditure other than administrative expenditures relating to the functioning of the Office of the High Commissioner is borne by the budget of the United Nations and all other expenditures relating to the activities of the High Commissioner are financed by voluntary contributions. While the statute does not define what is meant by "administrative expenditures", the term, based on a definition offered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in a report submitted to the Assembly at its seventh session (see A/2157, part III), has been interpreted to mean expenses other than operational expenses and the related management costs.

22.23 The proposals for the biennium 1996-1997 reflect the continuation of the current arrangement whereby the regular budget would finance 244 posts, 89 in the Professional category and above and 155 at the General Service level, as detailed in table 22.2.